

# ACYCLOVIR (ORAL)

## **About Your Medicine**

Acyclovir belongs to the general family of medicines call antivirals. Antivirals are used to treat infections caused by viruses. Usually they work for only one kind of group of virus infections.

Acyclovir is taken by mouth to treat the symptoms of herpes virus infections of the genitals. Although Acyclovir will not cure herpes, it hopes help relieve the pain and discomfort and helps the sores (if any) heal faster.

Acyclovir may also be used for other viral infections as determined by your doctor. However, it does not work in treating certain viruses, such as the common cold.

If any of the information in the leaflet causes you special concern or if you want additional information about your medicine and it's use, check with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. Remember, keep this and all other medicines out of reach of children and never share your medicines with others.

## **Before Using This Medicine**

Tell your doctor, nurse and pharmacist if you:

- Are allergic to any medicine, either prescription or nonprescription (OTC);
- Are pregnant or intend to become pregnant while using this medicine;
- Are breast-feeding;
- Are taking any other prescription or nonprescription (OTC) medicine;
- Have any other medical problems.

## **Proper Use of This Medicine**

Patient information about the treatment of herpes is available with this medicine. Read this information carefully.

Acyclovir is best used as soon as possible after the symptoms of herpes infection (for example, pain, burning, or blisters) begin to appear.

Acyclovir may be taken with meals.

To help clear up your herpes infection, keep taking Acyclovir for the full time of treatment, even if your symptoms begin to clear up after a few days. Do not miss any doses. However, do not use this medicine more often or for a longer period of time than your doctor ordered.

If you do miss a does of this medicine, take it as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not double doses.

## **Precautions While Using This Medicine**

Women with genital herpes may be more likely to get cancer of the cervix. Therefore, it is very important that Pap smears be taken at least once a year to check for cancer. Cervical cancer can be cured if found and treated early.

If there is no improvement in your herpes infection after you have taken this medicine for a few day, or if it becomes worse, check with your doctor.

The areas affected by herpes should be kept as clean and dry as possible. Also, wear loose-fitting clothing to avoid irritating the sores or blisters.

This medicine may cause some people to become dizzy, drowsy, or less alert than they are normally. Make sure you know how you react to this medicine before you drive, use machines, or do other jobs that require

you to be alert. If these reactions are especially bothersome, check with your doctor.

Herpes infection of the genitals can be caught from or spread to your partner during any sexual activity. Even though you may get herpes if your partner has no symptoms, it is more likely to be spread if sores are present. This is true until the sores are completely healed and the scabs have fallen off. Therefore, it is best to avoid any sexual activity if either of you has any signs of herpes. The use of a condom probably will help prevent the spread of herpes. However, spermicidal jelly or a diaphragm will probably not help. It is important to remember that Acyclovir will not keep you from spreading herpes to others.

In some patients tenderness, swelling or bleeding of the gums may appear soon after starting treatment with Acyclovir. Brushing and flossing your teeth carefully and regularly and massaging your gums may help prevent this. See your dentist regularly to have your teeth cleaned. Check with your physician or dentist if you have any questions about how to take care of your teeth and gums or if you notice any tenderness, swelling, or bleeding of your gums.

This medicine must not be given to other people or used for other infections unless you are otherwise directed by your doctor.

**Possible Side Effects of This Medicine**

Side effects that should be reported to Dr. Kern immediately:

- changes in menstrual periods (with long-term use)
- skin rash

**Side effect which usually do not require medical attention:**

- acne (with long-term use)
- diarrhea
- dizziness
- headache
- joint pain
- loss of appetite (with long-term use)
- nausea or vomiting
- trouble with sleeping (with long-term use)

Other side effects not listed above may also occur in some patient. If you notice any other effects, check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.